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The Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia

in opposition to the Dogmas of
Papal and Protestant Christendom

A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

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AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD

"IN YOUR PATIENCE POSSESS YE YOUR SOULS"

Our reading this morning in Nehemiah contains a number of names, most of which we cannot assign to an individual or a place. Those names which we do recognize may bring to our minds particular help in our efforts to willingly serve our Father. One familiar name is "Anathoth" found in Nehemiah 11:32. Anathoth was a city in Benjamin and the home of Jeremiah, as we read:

"The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:"

Jeremiah 1:1.

When Joshua, at God's command, divided the land of Canaan by lot, Anathoth was one of 13 cities given to the priests, the sons of Aaron, as their place of habitation. It is also mentioned during Jeremiah's witness to idolatrous Judah and Jerusalem. The Almighty spoke in warning to the prophet:

"...thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword: their sons and their daughters shall die by famine:

And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation." Jeremiah 11:21-23.

Yet, the prophet, encouraged by God, continued his faithful witness until the final captivity of Jerusalem. During the siege of that city by Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar, the Almighty spoke to Jeremiah, who was imprisoned because of his testimony against Judah:

"Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it." Jeremiah 32:7.

At this time Anathoth had been conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, so that any property in that city would be worthless to a Jew. Yet at God's command, Jeremiah faithfully redeemed the field and sealed the documents, confirming its sale. He prayed for help to do so, and God answered him:

"... Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is

desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah,...for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD." Jeremiah 32:42-44.

The Almighty reassured His prophet of His unfailing purpose:

"...If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them." Jeremiah 33:25-26.

Jeremiah's faith in buying the field in Anathoth was a sign to Israel that these promises would come to pass, impossible as that must have seemed at the time. God had said to Jeremiah concerning this purchase:

"...is there any thing too hard for me?" Jeremiah 32:27.

The prophet bought the field about 590 BC, just two years before Israel's final captivity. Within 70 years of this date, as prophesied by Jeremiah, Jeshua and Zerubbabel led almost 50,000 men of Judah back to Judah and Jerusalem, commissioned by Cyrus, King of Persia, to rebuild the temple. Among those people were:

"The men of Anathoth, an hundred and twenty and eight." Ezra 2:23.

Some of these, possibly relatives of Jeremiah, would know of his redeeming the field. They possibly would have in their possession the record of its redemption, and would anticipate possessing it once again. Patiently they had waited in hope for many years, remembering Jeremiah's act of faith, and also the promise that a remnant would return within 70 years.

This morning we have read concerning those who later returned with Ezra and Nehemiah:

"...in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants."

Nehemiah 11:3.

Among the returning priests were the 128 from Anathoth who would, no doubt, ultimately return to their possession at Anathoth.

What a long time passed before the prophecy concerning fields being again possessed came about. Those who believed God's word through Jeremiah and had the evidence of possession in hand, would wait patiently, believing it would come to pass, for indeed - nothing is too hard for the Lord! By the time it did come to pass, Jeremiah had died, as had faithful Jeshua and Zerubbabel. There were new leaders and prophets - Ezra and Nehemiah. Yet God's word did not return unto Him void, as 128 men of Anathoth lived in their inheritance. Can we enter into their feelings as they settled in Anathoth, having waited so long, believing in God's promise? Would they not rejoice and give thanks to the Almighty for His mercy and provisions?

What of ourselves today, Brethren and Sisters? Are we truly waiting, looking, yearning for the coming of another Jeshua (Jesus) to lead His people to the inheritance promised to all the faithful since the time of Adam? Do we as well need to trust in His word and believe that nothing is too hard for Him, thus waiting patiently and hopefully for the fulfillment of a place in His promised kingdom, if accounted acceptable at Jesus' judgment seat?

Do we need to ask: What is patience? Our concordance tells us it involves longsuffering or long enduring under. The dictionary defines patience as "enduring pain, etc., without complaint or losing self-control, refusing to be provoked, calmly enduring difficulties, diligent or persevering." This is very helpful, for we do not naturally possess these qualities. We do fret, worry or try to make things happen when they are beyond our control. To be truly patient requires a simple and strong trust in God's word, in His grace, and in His Son, especially in troublesome or trying times. Jesus has given us help to perceive the importance of patience. He told His disciples in their watching, waiting and wondering, even as we experience:

"In your patience possess ye your souls." Luke 21:19.

Possess conveys the thought of owning or having control over. The root for the word is also used as "Creator" - when Peter exhorted his brethren:

"...if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

I Peter 4:18-19.

The Almighty God created all and therefore is the possessor or

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owner of all His creatures. In addition, those whom He has called to be His children are especially "possessed" as Paul tells us:

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

I Corinthians 6: 19-20.

We are bought, meaning redeemed. What is the price paid as a ransom to redeem? Price means something valuable and precious. We know the price paid; it was the life of His son, Jesus Christ, whom we have remembered here this morning as we have partaken of the symbols of His victory over His fleshly nature. He agonized to get that victory, accomplished only through the shedding of His blood. At the end of His life he cried out in triumph and gratitude: "It is finished." What was finished? It was His determination and struggle to "finish the work" God gave Him to do. Thus in joy and relief He could cry out:

"I have glorified thee on the earth:..." John 17:4.

Do we not struggle hard at times, Brethren and Sisters, to obey Jesus' injunction to His disciples:

"...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Matthew 16:24-25.

How much patience it takes to possess one's soul, to bring one's living into conformance with God's will, in the spirit of Christ as He cried out in His agony: "not my will, but thine, be done."

Let us then wait with patience, as did those of Anathoth in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. In hope and trust, may we cling to God's promised inheritance, struggling to keep our integrity in God's eyes, even as did Job throughout that long year of trial placed upon him. Of Job, James wrote:

"Take my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

James 5:10-11.

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In agony beyond belief, Job did endure! He emerged from his long trial a stronger and more perceptive child of God. What sustained him in his determination to retain his integrity? What kept him glorifying God rather than cursing Him?

"...I know that my redeemer (the One who bought him) liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:" Job 19:25-26

Here is the strength of Job, which enabled him to patiently endure and retain his integrity. How can we also endure (same word as patience)? Is it not by possessing our every-day living, bringing it under control in a way which glorifies our Father? David helps us to perceive how patience must work in this restraint of the flesh:

"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way...

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth." Psalm 37:7-9.

Like those of Anathoth who trusted in the Lord, let us, Brethren and Sisters, patiently determine to possess our souls, looking to that inheritance promised to those who in faith "rest in the LORD."

J.A. DeF

"DO YE NOW BELIEVE?"

Recently we have read of the Lord Jesus' last hours spent with His disciples, sharing with them the Passover meal and endeavoring to prepare them more fully for his death and ultimate departure to His Father. He knew they were uncertain, and in an effort to help asked:

"... Do you enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?" John 16:19.

These words caused them to question, and knowing this, He clarified their understanding, saying:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16:20.

In these few words He spoke of the trial that was yet before Him and

which they would soon share. He reminded them that their sorrow would be turned into joy, just as the sorrow now facing him would soon be over, as His daily struggle with His flesh ended on the cross with the hope of life eternal ahead, if He could overcome to the end. The world would then rejoice, thinking they had silenced Him and His teaching, while His friends would sorrow at His absence.

He spoke plainly to them and not in parables, as He taught of the Comforter's soon arrival, to bring spiritual power and a fuller understanding, to assist them in the work they were to carry on in His name:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26.

"... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:23-24.

He reminded them also of their own trials soon to come, and of the pain and hardship they would be called upon to endure for His name:

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:32-33.

Jesus had achieved an inner peace through the help of the spirit — steeling Himself for the suffering that He knew lay ahead in His capture and crucifixion at the hands of His enemies. He desired this same inner peace for His disciples, to help them deal with the hardships which lay ahead:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27.

They would feel bereft at His crucifixion, but renewed in hope when they witnessed His resurrection. Finally, with the arrival of the Comforter to strengthen their understanding, they would be more able to go out and continue His teaching.

In His instructions to them, how careful the Lord Jesus was to

explain that belief and faith must be constant if there was to be a continual growth of the spirit man:

“His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?”

John 16:29-31.

Paul was another who suffered many tribulations because of his faith and for the gospel which he preached. He also suffered with a physical disability which he asked in prayer might be removed.

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

II Corinthians 12:7-9.

Paul was to learn that this constantly chafing impediment was to remind him of his own fleshly weakness — emphasizing his mortal state, prone to failure and in need of continual spiritual strengthening. The growth of an individual’s faith and belief in the things of God feeds and strengthens the spirit man, and is a means of conquering and disquieting fleshly man within. In this recognition of his own weakness, Paul wrote to Timothy:

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

I Timothy 1:12-15.

Paul received Christ’s answer, “My grace is sufficient for thee”, and

thus endeavored to grow spiritually through an acceptance of his own personal circumstances, with a fuller knowledge of Christ through faith and belief.

To John in vision, the Lord Jesus left a message of hope to those who love Him:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

Revelation 3:19-21.

How fitting that He was known as the “Word made flesh” — the living embodiment of God’s purpose, that those who believe on Him may follow His words and example in their effort to attain unto the hope of eternal life.

We must ask ourselves Brethren and Sisters, as Jesus did the disciples, “do ye now believe?”, and thus grow daily in both faith and belief, which can bring an inner peace and the spirit’s promise of life eternal to those who struggle to overcome.

M.C.S.

FUNDAMENTALS

One of the main ecclesial magazines recently made the following comments:-

“The opening chapters of Genesis contain information which records the Creative work of God by His Spirit, but they do not explain precisely how long ago it occurred, nor in modern scientific terms how it was accomplished:

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Hebrews 11:3) We are told about the introduction of human life and the test to which it was put; and the consequences of failure, both for our first parents and for all their descendants. Built into the account is information concerning God’s redemptive work which will ultimately be completed through the involvement of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the other information is subservient to this.”

Now one of the things which upholders of the scriptures have to endure in these so called scientific times, is the cry "They are Fundamentalists!" This is said in such a way as to imply pity for having belief that the scriptures truly mean what they say. We respectfully ask the question, "Is it wise to make the remark that 'the opening chapters of Genesis --- which records the Creative work of God --- do not explain precisely how long ago it occurred?'"

Dr. J. Thomas did not have such an uncertain belief. Note some of his comments, as follows:-

"For our data in sacred chronology we are entirely dependent on the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures."

"Great confusion exists in determining the true epochs of the Creation, the Deluge, and the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, among those who are not satisfied with the Hebrew original. In Dr. Hales' Chronology may be found a hundred and twenty different opinions, among some 300, on the epoch of the Creation, dating backward from the birth of Christ."

"Out of twenty-nine computations of the World's age before me, I find only one that approximates to the truth, and that is the reckoning of the Chinese Jews, who make the world 4,079 years at the nativity. This is within 10 years of the truth."

"The wide discrepancies of chronologists are not owing to a defect of the data of the record, but to the want of a proper knowledge of the subjects treated of in the Scriptures."

It will be seen from the above comments that Dr. Thomas had the utmost belief in the correctness of the genealogies of the book of Genesis. We ask the question, "What would be the purpose of those genealogies if not to define the progress of time from Adam to Noah, to the time of the Deluge?" The total of those years as defined by the information given, was 1656 years. Is this not then precise? "Well," it might be said, "We do not know how long Adam existed before the fall from grace." The answer to this is that we DO know how long Adam existed:-

"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:

And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." (Genesis 5:3-5).

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So Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years from the time when:-

“--- the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7).

The creation of man was during the Sixth day of Creation, as the scriptures declare:-

“And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” (Genesis 1:31).

So from the Creation to the death of Adam was nine hundred and thirty years. “Ah,” says the incliner towards modernistic scientific thinking, “but we don’t know how long each of those creative days, as referred to in Genesis, took!”

Oh, yes we do! The law of Moses, given directly from the Most High in that divine visitation on Mount Sinai, clearly states:-

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”

(Exodus 31:16-17).

Go to an orthodox Jewish home, even now, on the seventh day, and it will be obvious that the Jewish people still believe in what God declared through Moses.

The Remnant therefore would respectfully submit, that we DO know how long ago the Creation occurred. As for those scoffing remarks, in this age of unbelief, directed at those who uphold the veracity of God’s witness in the holy scriptures, THAT such are Fundamentalists, let them scoff! It is a sign of the times:-

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine --- they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

What is not realised, is that much of so called science is mere theory. A product of a mixture of cleverly produced facts leavened by the imaginations of some who have been ambitious for prestige.

**WERE THERE HUMAN BEINGS ON EARTH
BEFORE ADAM?**

This question was asked of R. Roberts a hundred and thirty years ago. The following is his answer:-

“The idea apparently entertained by some, that there were races of men on the earth before the creation of Adam, can be reconciled with the account in Genesis; that previous to that time, “the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep;” The answer is the two things CANNOT BE RECONCILED. It is evident that prior to the six days re-arrangement of things, the earth was submerged in water and enveloped in vapour so thick that darkness prevailed; and of course human life, or any other kind of life, (for even aquatic life requires the sun) was impossible. The difference of race now existing, are without doubt, owing to differences of circumstances and climate, operating upon scattered families. We all know the change that comes with education and a change of country. A red Indian, brought to this country as a child, and brought up in the ways of civilisation, turns out a very different being from what he would in his native wilds. An English child, brought up in the woods of America, getting subsistence by fishing and hunting, will develop very differently from a member of the same family, living indoors and devoting himself to study, in the mild and humid climate of England. The one will become swarthy, tough, tall, strong, bony, angular and bluff, while the other will stop at middle size, attain but a moderate degree of physical strength, grow light-complexioned, smooth-featured, plump, full-brained and refined. This process continued in the line of posterity for centuries would show apparently two distinct races of men; especially if the hunting family shifted to the tropics. Now such changes as these took place in the commencement of man’s career. The human family has radiated from the east, as is shown by course of history and civilisation, and by the architectural traces of his path. Forced asunder by the confusion of tongues, families migrated in primeval times, according to taste and necessity; and acted upon by the dissimilar circumstances to which they were severally exposed, they soon presented through all the earth, those diversities of colour and shape that now constitute the basis of natural divisions. To suggest a difference of origin, on the ground of difference of type, is to ignore the operation of this law, and to construct a theory both without logical foundation, and in opposition to the scriptural record that “God hath made of one blood all the nations of men, to

dwell on the face of the earth." (Acts 17:26) There is no necessity for such a theory. The natural variations of species, produced by the universal law of development according to condition, is sufficient to account for the different races of man."

A BIBLE CLASS

"THE LORD GOD IS A SUN AND SHIELD"

Psalm 84:11

David had a great love for God and a trust in His sure promises, expressed in this Psalm as he wrote:

"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!"

Psalm 84:1.

The Hebrew for amiable is also used as beloved — helping us to perceive how David's heart was fixed upon the beloved tabernacles or dwelling places of the Lord, which are promised to those, like David, who strive to glorify Him. Jesus spoke of these abiding places to His apostles:

"In my Father's house are many mansions (abiding places): if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

John 14:2-3.

David, in fervent hope of such a promised place, cried out:

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

Psalm 84:2.

Courts are enclosed, protected places. In his great desire to abide in these courts of the Lord, David beseeched:

"O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Psalm 84:8-10.

To be a doorkeeper involves a waiting at the threshold, guarding the entrance, thus revealing David's longing to be granted a place in God's house, sheltered in His courts. He further revealed his perception of the care and protection of the Almighty for His children:

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“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Psalm 84:11.

How is God a sun? The word comes from a root meaning brilliance — intense light. We perceive the brilliance of the sun, such that one cannot look directly at it without damage or loss of sight. This is God, who provides warmth and light, needful for life itself. Do we not experience that as a plant is kept in darkness, it soon withers and dies? So all mankind would die without His light and warmth. Such is the glory of the brilliance of God! He spoke to Moses, who had pleaded — “. . . shew me thy glory”:

“. . . Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” Exodus 33:20.

God then is as the sun — the source of light — without which there can be no life. Being of such brilliance and glory, no man can look upon nor approach unto His Presence. As we cannot conceive of life without the sun, so we cannot exist without God.

He is also a shield, as He promised Abram:

“. . . Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Genesis 15:1.

What is a shield? It is a piece of armor to protect against the enemies’ weapons. The word is also used as defense. David knew the Almighty’s provision as a shield when he fought against the giant Goliath — the champion of the Philistines who defied the armies of Israel. When David told Saul he would fight against the giant, the king questioned: How could he, a mere youth, conquer such a formidable foe? David’s reply was:

“. . . The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine . . .” I Samuel 17:37.

David had experienced God’s deliverance, when he was a shepherd protecting his sheep, and was strengthened by that experience, believing God would again provide for him. Saul, desiring to help David as he prepared to battle Goliath:

“. . . armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed (began) to go, for he had not proved it . . .”

I Samuel 17:38-39.

David had not tested the armor, and when he did, said to Saul:

“. . . I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them. And

David put them off him."

Verse 39.

He had different armor — a shield which he had proved as a shepherd, when he had overcome the lion and the bear. Was this his shield — the protection and power of God with him? In confidence and trust in God's provision, David armed himself with a staff, a sling, and five smooth stones out of the brook — and went forth against the giant, saying:

"... Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."
I Samuel 17:45.

We know the result. David prevailed, killing the Philistine, thereby witnessing that truly there was a God in Israel, who was his shield!

Can we not perceive how David could exclaim — "... the LORD God is a sun and shield ..." — as all through his life he knew and trusted in the Almighty's provision? In this same trust, Paul wrote to his Ephesian brethren:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (adversary).

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Ephesians 6:11, 16.

What help, what love we too can know, from the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (II Cor. 1:3). As a sun and shield, He gives life and protection to those who, in love, trust in Him. Must we not, like David, pay fervently:

"O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."
Psalm 84:8-9.

Selah — meaning value it, considering the end of God's purpose — expresses the determination of all who are striving to be a part of that purpose when Jesus returns to gather the humble and faithful people who have turned to His Father as their light and protection.

J.A.DeF.

THE CRUSADES

Dr. Thomas writing on the above subject explained what the name means:-

"The soldiers of the papacy enrolled for the murder and extermination of 'Heretics', were to wear upon their vesture the Papal Cross, from which sign they acquired the name of 'crusaders'. In the words of the fourth Lateran Council --- the mark of the cross being assumed, the Pontiff-king, through his anointed priests, imposed the sign of his order upon all other classes of his subjects."

Writing about the events at the time of the crusades, Dr. Thomas explained:-

"The catholics --- of the east and west, insisted upon their peculiar title to the Holy Land, then --- in the possession of the Turks; and that this title which was inalienable, had been sealed by the blood of their divine saviour. On this assumption, they affirmed that it was their right and duty to rescue their inheritance from the Mohammedans, its unjust possessors, who profaned his sepulchre, and oppressed the pilgrimage of his disciples.

But in this argument which overwhelmed Asia and depopulated Europe, there were fatal errors ---. It is indeed true that the true believers have an inalienable title to the land; and that that title was sealed by the blood of Christ, when by his death he brought the Abrahamic covenant into force; so that the land becomes their inheritance; but it is not true, that it is the right and duty of these heirs to become crusaders to wrest their inheritance from the enemy. They are heirs, indeed; but they are also "joint heirs with Christ", and have therefore no right, and consequently it is not their duty, to take possession of it in his absence, even if they were able."

The crusades resulted in great misery and suffering, and much loss of life. And though the Western forces overcame the Turks, entering Jerusalem July 15, 1099; the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem lasted less than a century, for it was conquered by the Mohammedan Saladin A.D.1187. Then in A.D.1295 the Sultan of Egypt conquered the city of Acre, occupied by Crusaders, bringing to an end the age of the crusaders.

Amazingly the subject of that conflict over Palestine has again come up recently. An organisation of Crusader apologists has come

into being calling itself the "Reconciliation Walkers". The people who belong to it claim to be "Christian" who have been on a march to Jerusalem beginning at Cologne in Germany. At various stages of their walk people have joined the throng, who are now in Lebanon preparing to arrive in Jerusalem on July 15, the 900th anniversary of the sacking of the city by the Crusaders, who killed tens of thousands of the Muslim opponents at that time. These "Reconciliation Walkers" have a prepared message and with extended hand shakes are hoping to smooth away any lingering hostility from the past about the "atrocities of the Crusaders against the peoples of the East." A Lebanese commentator has made the comment:-

"The Reconciliation Walkers are terribly sincere and terribly out of their depth. Their words tell us more about where they are from than where they are going. They see themselves as carrying the conscience of Western arrogance and, by apologising, they hope to increase Western awareness of the region and Islam and so banish the negative images of the Middle East."

A member of a Muslim family whose family can directly trace their ancestry to the prophet Mohammed, was heard to say on the subject of the "Reconciliation Walkers", "The Crusades mean nothing to me. Let them walk to the White House." Of course when it comes to the subject of bloodshed, how can the focus be on the Crusades alone when the history of this 20th century is taken into consideration? Conflicts in the Middle East have resulted in death and misery during the past eighty years just as bad as the warfares of the 11th and 12th centuries.

These "Christian" organisers show another aspect of misguided religionists, who have a "zeal without knowledge". Obviously they are unaware of God's purpose, and have not really considered the import of the scriptural declaration:-

"I (will) make Jerusalem a burdensome stone FOR ALL PEOPLE: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces - - -"
(Zechariah 12:3).

RUSSIA — HOW IT DEVELOPED IN THE NORTH

In the middle of the fifteenth century what is now Russia consisted only of the grand-duchy of Moscow — a limited territory in the centre of Northern Europe, scarcely known even by name in the countries of the West. From that nucleus, in pursuance of an ambitious policy, and by a series of skillfully executed manoeuvres, it has been enlarged in all directions, till it now embraces the vast region lying between the Arctic Ocean on the North and the Black Sea on the South, with the Pacific as its Eastern and the Baltic as its Western boundary. Previous to the reign of Peter 1st, surnamed the Great, who ascended the throne in 1689, the history of Russia presents only a succession of savage struggles with surrounding nationalities. The ruling authority had attacked and been attacked by Mongols, Tartars, Cossacks, Turks, Lithuanians, Poles and Swedes; and advancing in power, had acquired the title of Czar or Emperor. Slavonic in race and language, and professing the Greek form of Christianity, the Russian people have never intermingled with the Western nations, but may be said, as a race, to partake of that character which was associated with the semi-civilised inhabitants of Asia. Amidst the rude Slavonians, Peter arose as a reformer of manners; and notwithstanding some grave faults, deserves to be spoken of as one of the greatest men in an age prolific in distinguished persons. His personal history is well known, and need not be repeated. What concerns us was his eager desire to extend as well as to consolidate the Russian power. Peter was animated with great aspiration. Besides desiring to civilise his people, his aim was to elevate them to the position of a leading nation; and he lived to accomplish his purpose.

Assuming the title of "Emperor of all the Russians", he vastly enlarged his dominions, built cities, created a navy and a well-disciplined army, pushing his conquests to the Sea of Azov, and to the borders of the Ottoman dominions, territories coveted by Russia.

These facts tell us that the "Prince of the Chief, of Meshech and Tubal (the prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 38) was not a fulfilment in ancient history. What Ezekiel shows is definitely for these times. The development of Russia, during the last few centuries, has been a gradual fulfilling of what the purpose of God determined should arise in the "north quarters"; and though Russia recently appears to have reverted to a "slumbering position", the nations should not delude themselves. Russia remains a dominant power, with a purpose to fulfil.

SIGNS OF HIS COMING
A PRAYER FOR THE MILLENNIUM

As one considers the huge structure at Greenwich nearing completion, the mind is caused to look back to that ancient time when a large project was contemplated in the land of Shinar. It came to nought because heaven overruled that mans' pride was to be thwarted.

The millennium dome is a remarkable structure, intended to celebrate mans' achievements to date, but also as a looking forward to even greater works in the years to come. In such a project there is failure to realise that time is of God, and so is the future of this earth. The Apostle Peter summed it up when he wrote that men will erroneously think that " - - - all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Peter 3:4).

A charity called the "Open Churches Trust" is endeavouring to have a special prayer for the new millennium. Every secondary school in the United Kingdom has been asked to suggest and formulate such a prayer. Submissions have been judged regionally, and these are now to go (at the time of writing) to another panel, to produce a shortlist of eight. These will then go to another panel, representing all the churches, which has been selected by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Then, it is expected, these will announce the most suitable prayer early in July. The intention afterwards is that the chosen prayer will be used in every place of worship taking part in Celebration 2000, at noon on January 1st, 2000.

A minister of religion has written to a national newspaper as follows:-

" - - - Surely the Dome and the millennium prayer stand in juxtaposition as symbols of vanity and inanity - - - what really are we celebrating? A century, not to mention a millennium, that has been the most barbaric in history? In the days of Noah, the Tower of Babel was built on the assumption that the people could reach up to God. It never got completed, and the people — who hitherto spoke a common language — ended up speaking in a "babble" of tongues. The millennium prayer is every bit as garbled, its blandness stripping it of any deeper meaning. The Dome may well turn out to be no more than a symbol of Godless vanity - - - ."

The above comment refers to another millennium prayer that has been prepared. Speaking of this, a commentator has voiced the

following:-

“Although praying is the simplest and most natural thing, there is rather more to it than a request starting off, “Let there be respect for the Earth.” The first law of prayer is that we must be honest and avoid pious and unmeaning platitudes; the second that we must be definite and particular, naming our sins, giving thanks for specific gifts and asking help for our special difficulties.

There can be no real prayer without the shaming, humiliating and exhausting process of self examination. Even if we achieve all this, God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. Prayer is not an easy way to save us from trouble or a means of escaping our responsibilities: it brings the strength and endurance to meet them.

Sadly, many of us connect prayer with emergencies and crises. It is therefore no surprise that some should see the millennium as an opportunity to ignore the fundamentals in favour of a Godless chant which might have been written by the author of “Give Peace a Chance”.

It will be seen by the above examples, that some individuals have seen through millennium celebration follies. To those who look beyond the works and celebrations of men, the encouraging words of Christ come as a refreshing:-

“--- when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”
(Luke 21:28).

Israel’s revival is one of those things. The millennium that is coming is another, for heaven has placed a limit on time and opportunity. The words of the book of Revelation are pertinent to this consideration:-

“--- the angel which I saw --- sware by him that liveth for ever and ever --- that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel --- the mystery of God should be finished --- .”
(Revelation 10:5-7).

NEWS FROM THE ECCLESIAS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK, Corner Southwestern Blvd. and Pleasant Ave.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.30 a.m.

Sunday Afternoon Class 1.45 p.m.

Midweek: Bible Class: Forestville, Hamburg and Fredonia

Every Third Week: Revelation Study

As all, young and old alike, advance in age towards the inevitable end for all flesh, we are grateful for the measure of health granted in our Father's kindness. This enables each to join in the joys and duties of belonging to His house.

Our summer outing is planned, God willing for August 14th.

J.A.DeF.

MANCHESTER, Ryecroft Hall, Audenshaw.

Sundays: Breaking of Bread 11.00 a.m.

Thursdays: Bible Class 7.15 p.m.

News from Eastern Europe and the Middle East indicate that human affairs follow a pre-destination.

Jesus clearly warned that such times of international fearfulness and trouble would herald His coming back from Heaven.

What a comfort is the assurance, in the Holy Word of the Almighty Father, that those striving to have The Faith are remembered in Heaven, and are promised ultimate deliverance from the ills of this present dispensation of prevailing unrest.